IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0081] with the following rewritten paragraph [0081]:

[0081] Components 100, 200, 300 and 400 may be constructed of nitinol, stainless steel, or any other suitable material, or combination thereof. The inside-the-graft retaining ring may or may not be attached to the connector ~~base~~body. The entire structure could be cut from one piece of nitinol tube and formed into the desired features, for example. Provided herein~~—~~below are brief descriptions of drawings in connection with the separate components of connnector assembly 500.

Please replace paragraph [0114] with the following rewritten paragraph [0114]:

[0114] For attachment, graft conduit 900 may be positioned adjacent to tip 835 of graft loading tool 800 such that opening 902 at end 911 faces connector assembly 500 and such that central longitudinal axis 910 is axially aligned with the length of lead portion 830. As illustrated in FIG. 27, toe 916 and heel 920 of opening 902 may be advanced in the direction of arrows 921 and 922, respectively, about lead portion 830 of loading tool ~~300~~800, through substantially annular element 302 of outside-the-graft retaining band 300, and about inside-the-graft retention features 208 of inside-the-graft retaining ring 200, such that all points substantially about periphery 905 of opening 902 are draped over annular element 124 of connector body 100 and about inside-the-graft retention features 208. Then, tissue holding elements 823 may preferably be manipulated to press against exterior surface 903 of periphery 905, thereby holding conduit 900 about body portion 820 of tool 800 and about inside-the-graft retention features

208 of connector assembly 500, as shown in FIG. 27A, for example.

Please replace paragraph [0117] with the following rewritten paragraph [0117]:

[0117] Inside-the-graft retention features 208 of ring 200 may penetrate and pass through the side wall of graft conduit 900 from interior surface 901 to exterior surface 903 as a result of, for example, compressing the graft against the tips of features 208 with a physician's tool (e.g., the vein piercing tool described in Logan et al. U.S. patent 6,669,256, which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety), thereby forcing the free end portions of features 208 to pierce through the graft wall. Sharpened tips of the free end portions of features ~~900~~208 may facilitate penetration of conduit 900, while blunt rear surfaces may resist withdrawal therefrom, like a barb. Conduit 900 may be additionally or alternatively directly sutured to connector body 100. Alternatively, conduit 900 may be secured to connector body 100 by, for example, pinching, inverting, clinching, stretching, or any other suitable manner of attaching the graft to the connector, with or without glues, clips, or any other connector elements.